



Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Legal Office, 3 West Road, Virks Building, 4th floor, Cranston, RI 02920
phone: 401.462.2326 fax: 401.462.1678

September 18, 2018

Honorable Patricia A. Serpa, Chairwoman
House Committee on Oversight
101 State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairwoman Serpa:

Please accept the attached report as the State's most recent update on the RIBridges system, which covers the reporting period August 15, 2018 – September 15, 2018. This document provides monthly updates on the following topics:

- System performance and improvement;
- DHS staffing and employee training;
- Pending applications;
- SNAP timeliness and lobby/call center summary;
- CCAP off-cycle payments; and
- LTSS interim payments.

We appreciate your continued advocacy on behalf of those we serve and your interest in the health of the RIBridges system and the progress made to address outstanding issues. As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Eric J. Beane, Secretary



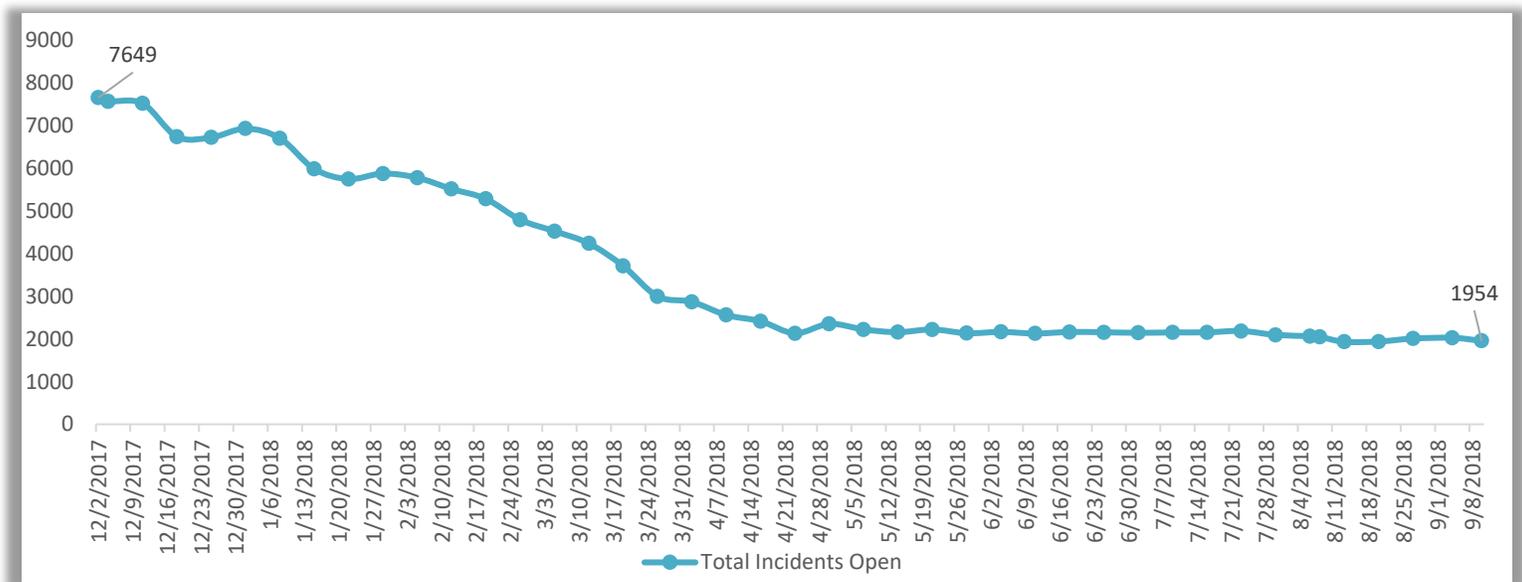
RI Bridges: Monthly Update

September 2018

The Executive Office of Health & Human Services coordinates and supports the delivery of programs and services across Rhode Island's health and human service agencies. Our team takes its charge seriously in promoting health, nurturing quality of life, and being there for Rhode Islanders when needed. Our oversight of work on RIBridges is an important part of the equation. Progress continues to be made on this system. As we move along, we will continue to put the pieces in place to ensure timely access to benefits for Rhode Islanders. This report provides an update on our efforts and progress to date.

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE + IMPROVEMENT

An important measure of system health and stability is the total number of incidents logged related to the RIBridges system. An incident accounts for any concern experienced in the system that needs to be investigated and, as needed, resolved. IT systems generally require updates and enhancements during their useful life, so an incident number will never hit zero. However, the incident count in RIBridges should gradually decline over time as the system is stabilized. The number of new and existing incidents logged into RIBridges continues to decline steadily. As of September 10, 2018, open incidents totaled 1,954.



On September 15, a system upgrade – known as a “release” – was completed with the goals of implementing a number of improvements. Primarily, these include:

- Aligning our system to reflect policy changes to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) that encourage stability in early childhood education. This includes allowing families to receive benefits for a continuous 12-month period, as well as a three-month grace period of benefits following the loss of employment.
- Giving applicants with disabilities the ability to report Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE) accounts' financial options that allow them to save for disability-related expenses on a tax-deferred basis. Customers' entire financial resources are reported with this addition, without limiting eligibility for State and/or federal programs.
- Improving SNAP-related functions to further enhance timeliness, benefit and eligibility accuracy, and federal compliance.
- Making system changes that assist staff in more efficiently, accurately determining eligibility for the Sherlock program. This program provides Medicaid for working people with disabilities.

DHS STAFFING + TRAINING

Staffing Overview

DHS continues to make progress in strengthening its workforce. During this reporting period, DHS hired 13 employees. These include the following positions:

- Customer Service Aides – 4
- Central Management Positions – 2
- Senior Casework Supervisor – 1
- Supervising Eligibility Technicians – 3
- Employment and Career Advisors – 2
- Quality Control Reviewer – 1

Training Overview

During this reporting period, DHS' Center for Staff Development and Learning (CSDL) facilitated 84 hours of training, with 53 new and current DHS staff participating. Trainings included:

- New Hire Orientation
- Elderly, Adults without Dependent Children, and Disabled Training
- Customer Service Aide Training
- Rhode Island Works Training
- Client-Focused Support Workshop (also known as Customer Service)

CSDL continued its pilot of the newly redesigned Rhode Island Works Training Curriculum for eligibility technicians with participants from the Fraud unit and DHS employment and career advisors. The last two days of a nine-day training were completed during this reporting period. CSDL also continued to work closely with our consultants from the University of Rhode Island (URI) to pilot two soft skills workshops for time management and customer service. A total of 15 DHS employees participated.

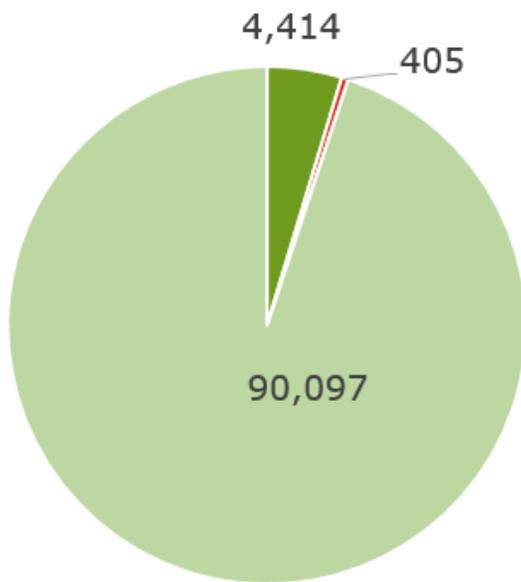
PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

The number of pending new applications across all programs is about 5,000 – the result of the priority the State continues to place on ensuring access to benefits along with a continued focus on system improvements and strengthening the DHS workforce. Overdue pending applications awaiting State action total 1,568.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Exp	14	27	41	16	15	31	72
SNAP Non	270	200	470	20	27	47	517
CCAP	22	213	235	6	4	10	245
GPA Burial	0	14	14	0	35	35	49
SSP	0	14	14	0	2	2	16
GPA	47	12	59	98	38	136	195
RIW	123	123	246	16	52	68	314
Undet. Cash	0	4	4	29	8	37	41
Undet. Med	7	522	529	40	365	405	934
MAGI	46	51	97	138	91	229	326
MPP	3	204	207	26	89	115	322
Complex Med.	18	93	111	87	322	409	520
LTSS	67	812	879	104	520	624	1503
Totals	617	2289	2906	580	1568	2148	5054

SNAP TIMELINESS

DHS continues to make progress in improving customer service. For the month of August, combined timeliness for SNAP applications was 92.6 percent (91.4 percent for expedited and 93.8 percent for non-expedited). This is the fifth consecutive month of timeliness over 90 percent.

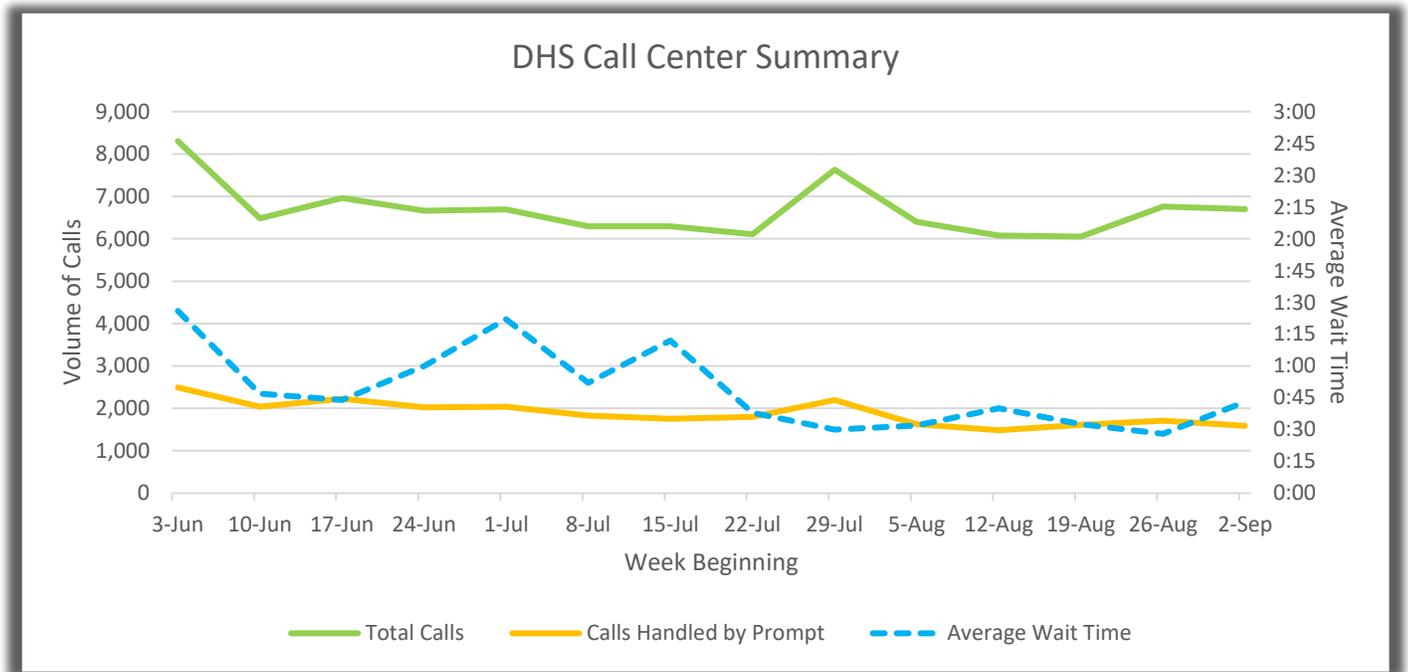


In August, SNAP benefits were issued to more than 90,000 households. While the number of applications not processed timely represents less than 1 percent of the total SNAP population, the State remains focused on ensuring all customers receive timely access to benefits.

Untimely August Applications | Timely Applications | Total SNAP Population

CALL CENTER PROGRESS

Average wait times remain steady.



CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

Below are the total number of batch payments made to child care providers from August 14 – September 15, 2018.

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (5, 5A, 5B)	728	\$3,222,834.24
Off Cycle (5A, 5B)	86	\$ 17,660.20
Providers Off-Cycle/Total	11.81%	N/A
Payments Off-Cycle/Total	5.30%	N/A

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (6, 6A, 6B)	1183	\$3,680,815.28
Off-Cycle (6A, 6B)	532	\$ 676,115.87
Providers Off-Cycle/Total	44.97%	N/A
Providers Off-Cycle/Total	18.37%	N/A

Note: Batch 6A was the retroactive pay increase and the one-time stipend to all family home providers.

LTSS INTERIM PAYMENTS

We continue to make progress in reducing the LTSS backlog of applications. As of this submission, there are 520 overdue LTSS applications pending State action. In September, through the contingency payment process, which ensures nursing and assisted-living facilities receive prompt reimbursement from the State, the State paid out \$1,588,143 (schedule attached). Our payment reconciliation process is ongoing.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH FEDERAL PARTNERS AND SPECIAL MASTER

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is an important partner to the State. We continue to meet regularly to review progress on RIBridges. Listed below is a list of federal correspondence during this reporting period. The Special Master's monthly report is also included.

- August 15, 2018: Correspondence from FNS regarding Rhode Island's Corrective Action Response (CAR) on June 28, 2018
- August 17, 2018: Correspondence from DHS requesting an increase in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program's Standard Utility Allowance for Rhode Island
- August 21, 2018: Correspondence from FNS approving request to increase Rhode Island's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program's Standard Utility Allowance effective October 1, 2018
- August 21, 2018: Correspondence from FNS informing DHS of the results of FNS' Fiscal Year 2018 Financial Management Review of the Rhode Island Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- August 30, 2018: Correspondence from FNS regarding the completion of its Amendment #8 review
- August 31, 2018: Correspondence from FNS regarding their 2017 Financial Management Review of DHS' FFY 2015 and FFY 2016 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- August 31, 2018: Correspondence from DHS in response to an FNS letter dated July 20, 2018
- September 7, 2018: Correspondence from FNS to notify DHS of their intent to conduct a Quality Control Integrity Review of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program's quality control process during the week of October 22, 2018
- September 7, 2018: Special Master's 10th report to the courts
- September 14, 2018: August 2018 SNAP Application Timeliness Report, as part of Gemmell agreement

